

As America's newest generation of veterans returns from Afghanistan and Iraq, joining those who have served proudly in previous conflicts, we must ensure that our government makes good on its obligation to provide them with adequate health care, educational and career opportunities, and other support services. We must also ensure that those who continue to serve on active duty have the support they need from back home, whether it be adequate protective equipment, compensation for extended or repeated tours of duty, or sufficient training and recuperation time between tours.

As a member of the [House Committee on Appropriations](#), I have fought over the years to ensure that the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have the resources they need to meet the needs of service members and veterans in the Fourth District and across the country. I have focused in particular on the need for increased VA medical and prosthetic research funding; for increased attention to veterans' mental health needs; and for reduction of the crushing claims processing backlog that prevents veterans from receiving the timely care they need and deserve. I have also paid special attention to the needs of North Carolina's National Guard and Reserves, who have played a critical role in our military efforts over the past decade. I am especially proud of North Carolina's new National Guard Emergency Operations Headquarters, constructed in large part with Recovery Act funds.

While we have made progress, much more work remains to be done. Increased diagnoses of behavioral and mental illnesses, for example, require a serious and dedicated commitment of resources for treatment, support, and further medical research. The tragic rise in instances of suicide, among both veterans and active-duty service members, is a critical issue that needs to be addressed swiftly and effectively. We must redouble our efforts to help homeless veterans – who number over 1,000 in North Carolina alone – access stable and affordable housing. In addition, the continued economic downturn has caused an uptick in unemployment among veterans of all ages.

I have cosponsored various bills in the current Congress to address these and other issues facing our nation's veterans and military families, including:

- [H.R. 115](#), the CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act of 2011, which would increase the maximum age at which children could receive care under the CHAMPVA program to 26, in line with the recent increase provided for in the Affordable Care Act;
- [H.R. 178](#), which would ensure that the surviving spouse of a deceased active-duty

service member or veteran receives full and fair compensation by repealing the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset;

- [H.R. 181](#) , the National Guardsmen and Reservists Parity for Patriots Act, which would provide retirement "parity" for National Guardsmen and Reservists who have served on active duty over the last decade;
- [H.R. 303](#) , the Retired Pay Restoration Act (often known as the "concurrent receipt" bill), which would ensure that disabled veterans receive their full and fair share of both retirement pay and disability compensation;
- [H.R. 865](#) , the Veteran Employment Transition Act, which, among other provisions, would provide a \$2,400 tax credit to employers who hire veterans; and
- [H.R. 2559](#) , the Helping Homeless Heroes Act, which would bolster the VA's efforts to combat homelessness among veterans.

As your Representative, I will continue to fight to ensure that our nation keeps its promises – from adequate health care to opportunities for educational and economic success – to those who have honorably sacrificed to defend our country.

A wide range of [information on services available to veterans is available on my website here](#) . If you are a veteran and are experiencing difficulty in obtaining the benefits you deserve, please [contact my office](#) , my staff will be happy to help you.

Veterans Links

- [Veterans Jobs Bank](#)
- [Joining Forces \(White House\)](#)
- [North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

- [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#)
 - [American Legion](#)
 - [AMVETS](#)
 - [Disabled American Veterans](#)
 - [Vietnam Veterans of America](#)
 - [Paralyzed Veterans of America](#)
 - [Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America](#)
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Supporting Our Troops

I believe that providing adequate resources and support for our troops is one of my most important responsibilities as a Member of Congress. Our troops need support not just from Congress, but from all Americans. Below are a few suggestions for how you can help:

Learn how to donate [phone cards](#) , [computers](#) , or your [frequent flyer miles](#) to support our troops.

Help soldiers through the [USO](#) programs.

Send a [care package](#) or a [message of support](#) .

If you are a member of the Armed Forces or part of a military family, please don't hesitate to [contact my office](#) if there is any way I can be of assistance. In addition, here are some links that might be helpful to you:

- [USA Cares](#)
- [Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve \(ESGR\)](#)